

The First Great Awakening

A series of religious revivals in the American colonies during the early to mid-18th century. 1730s to the 1740s.

Background and Causes

- Decline in Religious Zeal: A perceived decline in piety and an increase in secularism.
- Enlightenment Influence: The rise of rationalism and scientific thought challenging traditional religious beliefs.
- Colonial Growth: Rapid population growth and westward expansion created a more diverse and less cohesive society.

Key Ministers

- Jonathan Edwards: Known for his fire-and-brimstone sermons, notably "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."
- George Whitefield: An English preacher known for his dramatic and emotional preaching style.
- John Wesley: Founder of Methodism played a significant role in the movement.

Impact on Society and Religion

- Growth of New Denominations: Increased numbers of Baptists, Methodists, and other evangelical groups.
- Challenge to Established Churches: Decline in the influence of Congregationalist and Anglican churches.
- Social and Political Consequences: Encouragement of ideas about equality and individual rights, which later influenced the American Revolution.
- Long-term Religious Influence: Continued impact on American religious landscape, contributing to the Second Great Awakening.
- Influence on American Identity: Emphasis on personal liberty and responsibility, which resonated with emerging American values and culture

The Second Great Awakening

A Protestant religious revival movement in the United States during the early 19th century 1790s to 1840s

Background and Causes

- Reaction to Rationalism: Response to the Enlightenment and the perceived decline in religious fervor.
- Social Changes: Impact of the American Revolution, westward expansion, and the market revolution.

Key Ministers

- Charles Grandison Finney: Known for his innovative revival techniques and focus on social reforms.
- Lyman Beecher: A prominent minister who advocated for temperance and abolition.
- Barton W. Stone: Leader in the Restoration Movement and co-founder of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).
- Peter Cartwright: Methodist preacher known for his circuit riding and fiery sermons.

Impact on Society and Religion

- Growth of Evangelical Denominations: Expansion of Methodists, Baptists, and other evangelical groups
- Social Reforms: Connection to various reform movements, including abolitionism, temperance, women's rights, and education.
- Increased Lay Participation: Greater involvement of ordinary people in religious activities and leadership roles
- Idea of moral responsibility in American culture.

Pew Research: 9/13/22 Tweet:

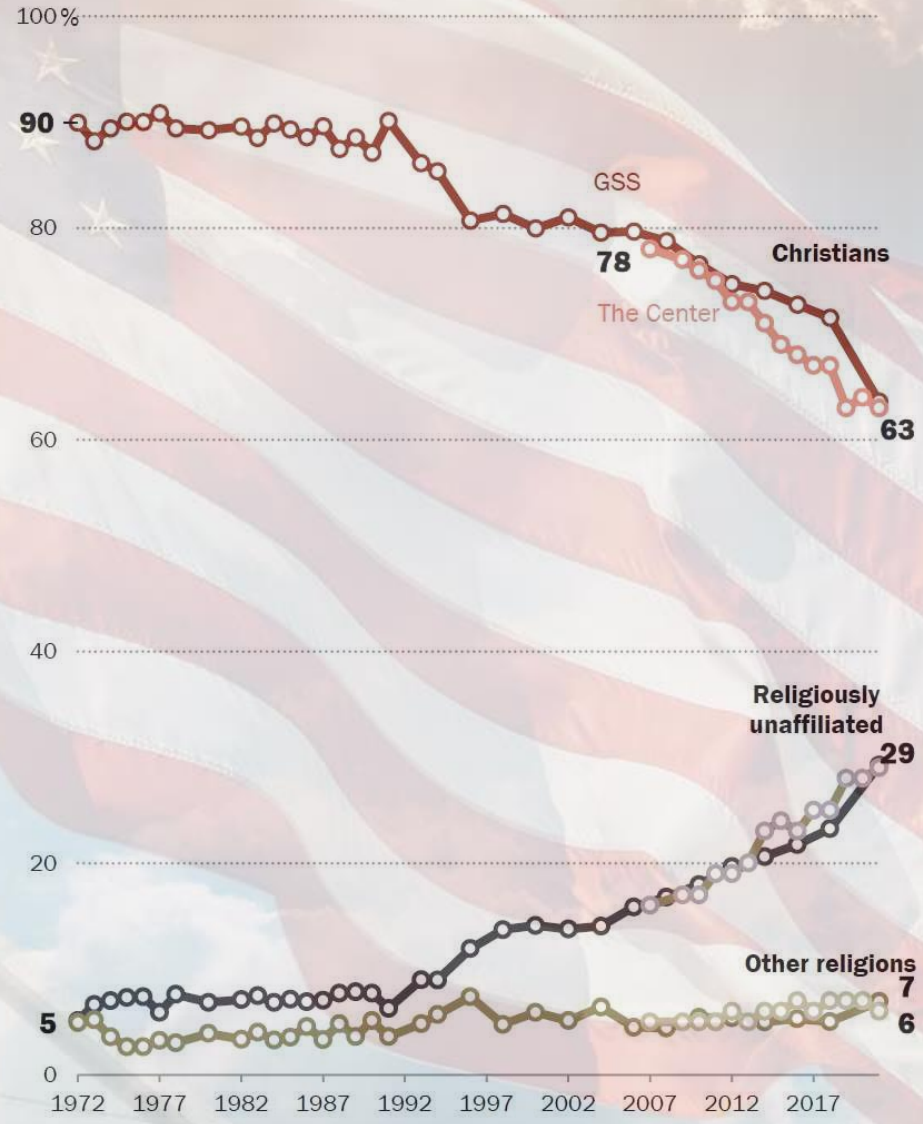
“As recently as the early 1990s, about 90% of U.S. adults identified as Christians. In 2007 the share was at 78%. Today, that number is down to 64%. Since 2007, the share of adults who identify as religious “nones” has grown from 16% to 29%.”

<https://pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/>



The rise of religious 'nones' looks similar in data from Pew Research Center and the General Social Survey

General Social Survey (darker) and Pew Research Center (lighter) estimates of U.S. religious composition, among U.S. adults



The background of the slide features a large, semi-transparent image of the United States flag waving in the wind against a bright, cloudy sky. The flag's stars and stripes are clearly visible, though slightly faded to allow the text to stand out.

Current Situation

George Barna Surveys on Biblical Worldview

2018 – 6% of Americans hold a biblical
worldview

2022 – 4%

2024 – roughly 2%



The background of the slide features a large, semi-transparent American flag waving in the sky. The flag's stars and stripes are clearly visible, and the sky is a light blue with soft, white clouds. The overall tone is patriotic and serene.

Current Situation

According to Dr. George Barna, CRC Director of Research, “Americans have been aggressively redefining the nation’s morality for the past several decades. That shift is still in progress. Our research provides a compelling context for such a moral recalibration.” Social fabric and well being of people everywhere is unraveling before our eyes.

